

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1870.

Subject: Night and Darkness.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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NIGHT AND DARKNESS.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”—EPH. v., 11.

The term *fruit*—*unfruit*—is not uncommon in Scripture usage. The origin of it is very obvious. That which the tree produces, or brings forth—its fruit—is very naturally transferred to that which a man develops in the form of conduct; and that is called “fruit.” “The fruit of the Spirit” is said to be “love,” “joy,” “peace,” and what not. And things that are *unfruitful*, by contrary, are worthless. “The unfruitful works of darkness” are such works, or disclosures, as are without profit; without juice, as it were; without benefit, sustenance, goodness.

“The works of darkness”—this is the phrase for which I have selected the passage; for I wish to-night to speak on the subject of Night and Darkness. “Have no fellowship with the works of darkness.”

Light and *dark* are employed in the word of God to signify good and evil; and, again, sin and obedience, virtue and vice, right and wrong. They have passed so perfectly into usage that “darkness” is considered as equivalent to sin, and “light” is considered as equivalent to virtue, without any figure. Not only so, but comprehensively viewed, in Scripture the whole realm of evil is called a kingdom. All that proceeds from men’s passions and appetites is considered as a kingdom; and those people that do evil are the inhabitants of the kingdom. So Satan is called “the ruler of the darkness of this world,” because he is the ruler of bad men. And so, on the other hand, there are the “kingdom of light,” and the “household of light,” and the “children of light.” Therefore we are commanded to *let our light shine*; as if it had been said, “Let your virtues shine.” It was not necessary to make an interpretation even.

The context carries this figure out in a variety of ways. “Ye were sometimes darkness”—that is, Ye were sometimes *wicked*—“but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light,” “and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove

them ; for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light ; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Why did such a use of terms come into play ? Was it accidental ? Did it merely happen so ? And then, having received a start, was it copied, so that at last it becomes common usage ? For it is not peculiar to either Scripture language or to our own. Neither have we borrowed it from Scripture alone. It belongs to all languages ; and, as far as it can be traced, it is peculiar to all nations from their very earliest days. It may be said that as far as literature interprets human habits, the race has been accustomed, from its earliest infancy, in all languages, and under all circumstances, to regard darkness as the equivalent of misconduct, and light as the equivalent of right conduct ; so that if there is any such thing as a natural term, those are natural terms. Light and virtue, and darkness and wickedness, are convertible terms, the world over, and through all time.

How, then, did it happen ? Was this a grand chance, or is there some connection between these things ? Is darkness congenial to wickedness, and productive of wickedness, more than light is ? Do men sin easier, more, worse, in darkness than in light ? Is there any natural principle involved here ? Yes—most certainly, yes.

Let us look at the normal uses of darkness and of night. It is very difficult to say much about them. It is difficult to say anything about creation. It is difficult to say why it is as it is. The moment you begin to ask why, there is no end to it. You might say, "Why are men created to average five feet ten, or eight ? Why are they not made twenty feet ? There is no end to *whys* in the matter of creation.

Why it is that full one-third of one's time is for death ; why it is that of every twenty-four hours there are eight hours of substantial death, no man can say ; but so it is. It takes eight hours to wind up the watch—that is, man. And experience teaches us that during that time of sleep darkness is beneficial—chiefly in this regard, that it puts everything to stillness ; that it withdraws excitement ; that it leaves the whole physical system, and the whole nervous system, quiescent ; that it leaves it in just the state in which the peculiar function of assimilation which goes on during wholesome sleep, finds its most auspicious circumstances. Darkness, to this extent, therefore, is a benefit. It is medicinal, in that it withdraws excitement, and gives full opportunity for rest, and for that recuperation which comes by rest. This is what it was designed for, in the economy of providence.

But in undue continuance, darkness is depressing to the physical

state. The amount of knowledge now collected on this subject is such as to leave it without a question. Outside of its normal uses, and beyond a certain extent, darkness is unhealthy. Men are not strong and wholesome who live from day to day in darkness, and work in darkness. Men that dwell in unventilated and unlighted dwellings, are never robust, and never have that peculiar stamina coming from light.

It is with trees just as it is with men. A forest-grown tree ; a tree that is not sound from top to bottom ; a tree that has not grown, and become seasoned, as it were, in the sun, is never so tough, is never so elastic, is never such good timber, as a pasture-grown tree.

Pasture-grown oak brings a higher price in the Navy Yards because it is stronger and more enduring for being grown in the sunlight. And what is true of timber, is just as true of men. Sunlight men, who have lived in the sun, are sturdier than men who are deprived of the sunlight. And statistics show that men who live in north rooms, in rooms facing the north, in any street, are more addicted to illness than men who live in rooms facing in the other direction. It seems as though this was carrying things too far. Not at all. Statistics show that among men in unsunned quarters of barracks or hospitals, there is some twenty per cent. more mortality than in quarters where the sun rests the greater part of the day. The fact is, the best medicine in the world is sunlight. The best doctor is the sun ; and he does not charge anything for giving the medicine either. There is nothing better for health than the sun. And there is nothing worse for health than the want of the sun.

So that if you look at it purely as a physical question, you find that there is a reason why light should be assimilated to virtue. It produces health of body, just as virtue produces health of mind. And darkness, on the other hand, like sin, aggravates disease, depresses the vital functions, and retards recovery. There is a certain analogy in these things ; and there is a reason in their very physical operation why these terms should be used as they are.

But there are other very important results of a moral kind connected with darkness, and therefore with night which is the kingdom of darkness. It is capable of producing even more depressing effects upon the moral nature than on the physical. The dangerous passions of men are held in check mainly by those elements which exist strongly and most generally in publicity. Fear, shame, self-respect, and self-interest—these four elements check our basilar nature. For, at the bottom, we are animals. And how to keep the animal under ; how to restrain it within its service-bounds ; how to prevent its riding ; how to keep back cruelty, and cunning, and all forms of passion, and all

gross and sensual appetites—how to do this, is the work of civilization. It is the teaching of time.

Fear is a powerful repellant of temptation, a powerful restraint; and with many natures it is the only one. As we go down on the scale, fear becomes more operative; and as we go up on the scale, and as civilization and moral culture increase, fear becomes less and less operative, and less and less heeded. But in regard to the great mass of men, anything that breaks the realm of fear is unsalutary and dangerous, because it takes off one of the hoops that hold the barrel together in which the evil spirits are confined.

Shame, too, is a thing of publicity. There could be no shame if there was no ear to hear; if there was no eye to see; if there was no other mind to know. For shame is a sense or feeling produced in the soul of a man by the consciousness of other people's opinions of him. And this, in its very nature, requires disclosure, development. And any circumstances which should prevent exposure and development, would remove the tendency to shame.

Self-respect is very largely dependent, also, upon the opinions of others—though not so much as is shame. Self-interest, too, is largely dependent upon the opinions of men. Our prosperity, our standing, depends upon men's thoughts of us, to a very great extent. Certainly this is so with the lower class of men; that is, uneducated and undeveloped men.

Now, darkness tends to relieve men from the pressure of all these restraints. In darkness men can hide; and therefore they are not afraid that they will be detected. No man can reel in the street by day and not be seen. At night he can—or he thinks he can, if he cannot. Men cannot do works of wickedness by day, openly, without being known, and being put to shame; but at night they can—they think they can. That is the time for concealment, when the sun hides, and virtuous men go to sleep. At night, when good men and all responsibility are within doors, then out of doors bad men ramp and riot. Now comes the kingdom of darkness. Now they have their chance. All day they have been afraid; all day their interests would not let them out; but as the sun has gone down, and is out of the way, and the children of light are out of the way with it, they mean to hold carnival. And they do. And night is found to be a time peculiar in this regard, that it sets loose the lower passions of men, and tends to do it, and has a powerful tendency to do it. There is a permission of wickedness in the night that there is not in the day. There is not only the provocative to wrong doing, but there is a guard, a conservative influence, thrown around about it at night, that is not thrown about it in the exposing hours of noon-day.

Night and darkness suspend men's labors, and give them release, so that they are able to congregate. And this, joined to the foregoing consideration, shows why wickedness multiplies itself so fearfully at night. During the day, industries are being carried on, and thousands of men are earning their daily pittance in the shop. And work is a great benefit. Men, while at work, are orderly. They are being wholesomely drilled. Their energies are concentrated on useful purposes. But at night all their energies are diverted from these legitimate channels, and are apt to be concentrated upon their self-indulgence. For men that toil, particularly men that live by toil, and are in some degree of circumscription and limitation of means, feel as though they had a right at night to pay themselves for what they have gone through during the day. They have worked hard; they have been temperate and under others' control; and at night they say, "Nobody is our master now. We have eaten our plain fare, and performed our hard work; and now we will pay ourselves for it. Men have strong tendencies at night to react from regular and virtuous method into license; and as they have the liberty of congregation, as they go out and gather together in their places of resort, whether they are vicious or virtuous, they form a public sentiment among themselves, and uphold each other. Men in hundreds indulge in language that they do not when they are alone or in mixed society. They indulge in practices which would seem loose and unvirtuous to them if they were in promiscuous assemblies. Men herd together, the good with the good, and the bad with the bad; and night is the time for bad men to come together, not only because they are shielded, but because they are released, and have liberty of congregation.

As a general thing, under such circumstances, the bad men in a community are more influential at night, and in the circumstances which night produces, than good men. There are certain situations in which good men are by far more influential than bad men; but they are usually exigencies. They are usually times in which the public sentiment calls for the exhibition of nobler and more manly traits. But the moment you step aside, the moment you step into the crevices of life, and into the abnormal ways of life, bad men rule it over good men. In a crowd of routs, a simple, plain, truth-speaking, moderate-tongued man is nothing. He is negatived. It is the violent, the noisy, the impudent man that there carries the day. At night, where men are gathered together in disreputable places, they that are the worst are apt to be the most influential, and to lead the rest. They give tone to the society, currency to its maxims, and stimulus to its temptations.

And therefore it is said, I think, in the next chapter of this very book, "We wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against prin-

cialities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." In this world they are "the rulers of darkness" that are the bad men; and there is, as it were, a great prince of darkness that rules over all darkness, and all bad men that are bred in darkness.

There is a curious phenomenon of moral change in society. Every twelve hours, if we will watch the thermometer, we shall find that the temperature of the day regularly changes, rising in the day-time, and going down at night. Taking the year through, that is the normal condition or range of the thermometer. And there is an analogy or parallel to it in moral temperature. We shall find that the virtue and the moral feelings ascend upon the scale upon the day-time, and descend on the scale at night.

If you could interpret the sight or the thought of the guardian angels of these two great cities, how different would be their experience during the day from their experience during the night! As they hang poised over the great out-lying Babylon all day, they see it, in the main, useful industries. They see some violence; they see much craft; they see strifes of selfishness and rivalries of ambition and of pride, to be sure; and for the most part the sins that they see are of this class. But when the sun goes down, and sheeted darkness comes upon the face of the city, how does the whole aspect change! How does the great caldron begin to seethe and bubble with another class of sins! Now how does drunkenness, how does lewdness, how do all the crimes of treachery, pelf, sneaking theft, and burglaries, begin to come forth! And the angel, looking on the sight, sees a spectacle of lower life. The whole temperature is gone down. The kind of deed is changed. And as at night heat disappears with the light, and the temperature sinks physically, so in the community the moral temperature goes down at night.

So much for the effects of darkness and of night. Now for some applications. And at the outset let me make some milder ones.

1. It is a very desirable thing (and this for those whom it may concern; for those that are beginning life)—it is a very desirable thing to begin life with nature, and run parallel to nature. For a man's strength is in the proportion in which he runs parallel with great natural laws, and with God's great providence. He is strong, he goes fast, who goes in the Gulf-stream; and he sails slow who sails against it. And great natural laws are streams that expedite men.

As a general thing, men can control their time; and the time for study and for work is the day; while the time for social recreation and rest is at night. The general rule, though there may be occasional exceptions to it, for every young man and every young maiden entering life, is, *Do your work in the day time*. Do not turn yourself into a stu-

dent at night. The practice has some charms, because we read in history and in literature about the *midnight oil*. The worst oil that a man ever burnt was midnight oil. It wastes society. It not only induces artificial excitement during that late hour just preceding sleep, which makes sleep less wholesome and less nutritive, but in every way deranges a man's habit. If a minister studies late Saturday night, or if he works late at night during all the week, you may be perfectly sure that he cannot be a robust wholesome man all round. I can detect the tendencies induced by habitual night-work. And, although the night, when everything is still, is the only working time for hard-run professional men, frequently, yet working at night is always pernicious, and should never be resorted to except as a choice between evils, even under such circumstances.

I think the judgments formed at night are never so solid and fresh as judgments formed in the morning. If in the morning a man is without charity, if he is despondent, if he is dull, if he is unnerved, you may be sure that he is living wrong. For the order of nature is, that a man should rise from his bed in the morning as birds rise, singing, and in perfect health. A man rises buoyant, and has his best hours in the early day. For although perhaps the fancy may not be so brilliant in the early day, the judgment is better. The conclusions and determinations which a man forms in the early day, are apt to be sounder and safer than those which he forms at night. Fancy for the night; judgment for the day. And I would say to every young person whom it concerns. Form, if it is a possible thing, the habit of doing your study in the day time, and reserve your nights for lighter tasks, and keep early hours with your bed. You do not profit, (I do not care who your exemplar is,) by departing from the great influences and laws of nature. There is many and many a man that wears out prematurely, because, without one single unvirtuous or vicious habit, he grinds his life out by night-work.

2. I protest against the use of night for social pleasures, to the extent which, in cities and in fashionable circles especially, it is prostituted. Pleasures, even within moral bounds, are not wholesome in the untimely hours of night. The turning of night into day, the creation of artificial lights; the use of the day again, amidst all its glare and din of excitements, for sleep—these things are not wholesome. They are not wholesome either to the body or to the soul.

Men laugh at the old fashioned New England custom of going out to tea at four o'clock in the afternoon, getting home again at seven in the evening, and going to bed at nine; but the men that that custom made were not to be laughed at. The men that are wearing out are city men. It seldom happens that city men breed strong men.

For, the city, like the grindstone, takes off the edge and the very steel from the sword. And the country has to send in its new men all the time. No city could perpetuate its power and maintain its influence, if it were not for the continual recuperation of its populations by the transmission of country-bred men, who have kept right hours and observed wholesome natural laws. They come in to make up for the waste and the consumption that arise from city practices.

Now, it is not wrong in the same sense that burglary is wrong, for a person to go to entertainments at ten o'clock at night; but it is wrong. At ten o'clock the festival begins, and by twelve or one o'clock it is at its height. And then comes the infernal feeding. And all men at night are pigs. At any rate, my observation of the bibulous and gustatory habits of men away from home, with curious viands, is such that I cannot but feel that the lower nature gets the ascendancy.

Have you ever seen men on a steamboat, where the table was spread, stand around the door ready to make a plunge and a rush for the table the moment an opportunity was given? Have you seen how men at parties take pains to get the most favorable situations at the table? Have you seen how men stretch and lean over in order that they may fare the best? Men, too, that are well fed at home, and that do not seem to need any special feeding—have you seen how they gormandize, how they stuff and fill, and forget everything but to eat, and eat, right and left, and eat something of everything—and this at twelve or one o'clock at night? And good men they are—deacons, elders, class-leaders, ministers—all good men! But when a man leaves his home at ten o'clock at night to go out for amusement, and takes his second supper, at one or two o'clock, what would you expect of him but that he should make everything consistent, and the whole abominable mess a violation of natural law? And in the world of fashion they keep this unnatural excitement up to most absurd extents.

By two, or three, or four o'clock they begin to go home; and then they retire. About the time they ought to get up they go to bed. Now comes the restless sleep of the forenoon. And then, about ten or eleven o'clock, dreary, and headachy, and desponding, they get up most dolefully to talk about their enjoyments!

The old fables say that there were creatures—salamanders—that could live in the fire. I believe it. For I have seen persons—men and women—that lived in a round of parties nearly every night for ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years, until they were perfectly drained, perfectly used up, and had to go to Saratoga or Newport to get over pleasure. They had enjoyed themselves so much that they were all run down. Their energies were all wasted. Their vitality was

all gone. Their nerves were unstrung. Their digestion was impaired. Their whole system was marked for disease.

And consider what a disreputable thing this is. Consider what a use it is of one's refinement, civilization, wealth, social position, to make them the instruments for destroying his body, ruining his nerves, taxing and racking and draining his system, and going on every single winter in this preposterous conversion of night into day, and day into night. Talk about a thief being wicked—a man that is habitually practicing such violence, although he does not sin against society, sins against the laws of God in his own body, and will have a day-of-judgment account to give for it. It is an abomination before God, and ought to be an abomination before every decent person.

There have been, in this congregation, many who have sinned in this way unwittingly. I have not been faithful to my duty in this matter. I ought to have told you these things before. But if, after this, the young people of this church carry sitting up at parties to the excess of which I have spoken, I do not mean that it shall be because they are ignorant of what I think about it. I want them to understand distinctly that I regard it as a gross violation. These dancings and feastings and fooleries at night, besides being wicked on the ground of the waste of time, are utterly unpardonable as being a sin against health, and against the great functions of life for which you were created of God. Did he create you to be a thistle-down? Were you born to be butterflies? Were you made to be mere triflers? Is there nothing for yourself, nothing for mankind, nothing for the glory of God, that is to try and task your energies in this life? If you are so using yourselves, or prostituting yourselves, as to turn day into night, and night into day, there will be a burning account for you to render by-and-by. There is many and many a dissipated one that will suffer retribution not only for indulgence in disallowable things, but for indulgence in allowable things in disallowable hours.

I can say these things, when some others could not, because I am known, and want to be known, as a friend of liberty, and a friend of pleasure. I rebuke the young who would turn monks. I do not believe in solitude. I do not believe in melancholy. I believe in gayety and joyousness. And I believe that the closer a man keeps to the laws of nature, the happier he will be, and ought to be. Therefore, being on the side of liberty, though not on the side of license, being on the side of wholesome, manly pleasures, and freedom in the indulgence of them, I stand, and have authority to stand, and say, When you pervert nature in this way, it is utterly wicked and utterly abominable.

3. There is another application which, although partial, is of great range and of supreme importance, addressing itself to doctors, to

guardians, and to parents, chiefly. I refer to the practice of allowing children to go out at night into the streets, if in cities; or, if in the country, allowing children to find their companions at night, and their pleasures at night, away from parental inspection. If I wanted to make the destruction of a child sure, I would give him unwatched liberty after dark. You cannot do a thing that will be so nearly a guarantee of a child's damnation as to let him have the liberty of the city, or the liberty of the town, after nightfall without your inspection, or the inspection of some person who has the right to govern his conduct. It is invariably true that under such circumstances children will fall under the influence and dominion of persons that will taint their blood; that will taint their imagination; that will untie the bonds of all equitable and just authority; that will make them deceitful, and lead them to seek their pleasures clandestinely. And before you know it, they will be speckled, and often rotten to the core.

I do not like to sow the seeds of suspicion in the minds of parents about their children; but there are thousands and thousands of parents in these cities who think, who *know*, that their children "never lie"; and yet their tongue is like a bended bow. They think their children never drink; but there is not a fashionable saloon within a mile of their homes, that the boys are not perfectly familiar with. They think their children never do unvirtuous things; and yet they reek with unvirtue. There are many young men who, when they return to their father's house, are supposed to have been making visits to this or that person. It is a mere guise.

The practice of allowing children to go out at night to find their own companions, and their own places of amusement, may leave one in twenty unscathed, and without danger; but I think that nineteen out of twenty fall down wounded or destroyed. And if there is one thing that should be more imperative than another, it is that your children shall be at home at night; or that, if they are abroad, you shall be abroad with them. There may be things that it is best that you should do for your children, though you would not do them for yourselves; but they ought not to go anywhere at night, to see sights, or to take pleasure, unless you can go with them, until they are grown to man's estate, and their habits are formed. And nothing is more certain than that to grant the child liberty to go outside of the parental roof and its restraints in the darkness of night, is bad, and only bad, and that continually.

Do not suppose that a child is hurt only when he is broken down. I have quite a taste in china cups, and such things. I like a beautiful cup. And I have noticed that when the handle gets knocked off from a cup of mine, that cup is spoiled for me. When I look at it

afterwards I never see the beauty, but always see the broken handle. If I have a beautiful mirror, and it is cracked, it may still answer all the purposes that I want a mirror for, to reveal my beauty; but nevertheless it is spoiled for my eye. There is that crack, and when I look into the glass I never see myself half so much as I see the crack. Its perfectness is gone. In the matter of beauty, a speck or a blemish is more than all besides, and takes away the pleasure of all besides. And it does not require that a child should be broken down, to be made useless by his exposures to temptation. I aver that there are many things which no man can learn without being damaged by them all his life long. There are many thoughts which ought never to find a passage through a man's brain. As an eel, if he were to wiggle across your carpet, would leave a slime which no brush could take off; so there are many things which no person can know, and ever recover from the knowledge of.

There are minions of Satan that go around with hidden pictures and books under the lappels of their coat, showing them to the young, with glozing, lustful, hideous, infernal scenes represented, which once to have seen is to remember, as if they were burned in with the fire of hell. And I do not believe there is a man in my hearing who will not bear testimony, if he ever heard a salacious song, where wickedness and nastiness were sheathed in wit, that he regrets to-day, and will regret to the day of his death, that he ever heard it. There are men that have turned from wickedness who look back with unfailing mortification and regret upon the fact that certain things have happened, and that they know certain things.

I do not believe in bringing up the young to *know life*, as it is said. I should just as soon think of bringing up a child by cutting some of the cords of his body, and lacerating his nerves, and scarring and tattooing him, and making an Indian of him outright, as an element of beauty,—as I should think of developing his manhood by bringing him up to *see life*—to see its abominable lusts; to see its hideous incarnations of wit; to see its infernal wickedness; to see its extravagant and degrading scenes; to see its miserable carnalities; to see its imaginations set on fire of hell; to see all those temptations and delusions which lead to perdition. Nobody gets over the sight of these things. They who see them always carry scars. They are *burned*. And though they live, they live as men that have been burned. The scar remains. And to let the young go out where the glozing courtesan appears; to let them go where the lustful fréquenter of dens of iniquity can come within their reach; to let them go where the young gather together to cheer with bad wit; to let them go where they will be exposed to such temptations—why, a parent is insane that will do it. To say, “A

child must be hardened; he has got to get tough somehow, and you may as well put him in the vat, and let him tan"—is that family education? Is that Christian nurture? Is that *bringing a child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?*

I thank God for two things—yes, for a thousand; but for two among many: first, that I was born and bred in the country, of parents that gave me a sound constitution and a noble example. I never can pay back what I got from my parents. If I were to raise a monument of gold higher than heaven, it would be no expression of the debt of gratitude which I owe to them, for that which they unceasingly gave, by the heritage of their body and the heritage of their souls, to me. And next to that, I am thankful that I was brought up in circumstances where I never became acquainted with wickedness. I know a great deal about it; for if I hear a man say A, I know the whole alphabet of that man's life, by which I can imagine all the rest. If I see a single limb, I have the physiologist's talent by which I know the whole structure. But I never became acquainted with wickedness when I was young, by coming in contact with it. I never was sullied in act, nor in thought, nor in feeling, when I was young. I grew up as pure as a woman. And I cannot express to God the thanks which I owe to my mother, and to my father, and to the great household of sisters and brothers among whom I lived. And the secondary knowledge of these wicked things which I have gained in later life in a professional way, I gained under such guards that it was not harmful to me.

If you have children, bring them up purely. Bring them up with sensitive delicacy. Bring them up so that they shall not know the wickedness that is known, unfortunately, by the greatest number of men.

And if there are children that are sometimes impatient of parental restraint, let me say to them, You do not know what temptation you are under; and if, held back by your mother, if held back by your father, you shall escape the knowledge of the wickedness that is in the world, you will have occasion, by-and-by, to thank God for that, more than for silver, or for gold, or for houses, or for lands.

Keep your children at home nights. Oh! there is many a sod that lies over the child whose downfall began by vagrancy at night; and there is many a child whose heart-breaking parents would give the world if the sod did lie over them. And oh! what a state that is for children to come to, in which the father and the mother dread their life unspeakably more than their death! What a horrible state of things that is, where parents feel a sense of relief in the dying of their children! Take care of your children at night.

4. As night and darkness are so full of mischief, so in every sanita-

ry work that we undertake in life, we ought to act on these great and acknowledged truths. Broad streets, clean above and below, with an abundance of light, and a judicious police, will do more toward repressing vice (though not toward promoting virtue) in cities, than all the benevolent associations and churches put together. It would be impossible for all the churches in the world to reform against the influence of night.

Therefore, while we preach the Gospel, and while we attempt to reclaim the vicious and the wicked by means of reformatory associations, we ought to join in the application of those great physical laws which interpret life, and explain to us that darkness and circumscription are inevitably full of temptations which common men are not able to rise up against and resist.

Broad open streets, where secrecy is impossible, are of the first importance. Let there be light enough. It is the worst economy in the world to light a city as some of the streets in this city are lighted. I wish the Alderman of the First Ward were in my congregation. I would ask him to go through some of these streets—for instance Pine-apple street, from Hicks to Columbia—and see what a light there is there. There is but one lamp for all that distance, so far as I can see, and darkness reigns well nigh supreme. And in going through the city I have seen many such unlighted streets. If a street is narrow and out of the way, it seems to be thought not worth while to waste gas on it. It is worth while. Every time you multiply gas posts, you save the need of schools and churches. It is lighting these streets, it is taking darkness out of them, that diminishes temptations. And all over the city, not simply as a sanitary measure, but as a moral measure, there ought to be provision made for abundant air and cleanliness and light. Then, with the good example of virtuous men, with the preaching of the Gospel, and with all the agencies of industry, the populations of our cities might be healthy, moral and Christian. But we shall never Christianize cities till we know how to apply natural law and material law in connection with the power of moral influences and the *stimuli* of moral example.

These words which I speak to-night are not simply for those whom they may concern, but for all the teachers of the community. Doctors are ordained to teach men the laws of health. They know better than any others, perhaps, how much morality carries health, and how much immorality carries sickness. And it is for them to teach sanitary measures, and anticipate temptations and sickness. The duty of educators is not simply to teach the text of the books. Their duty is to bring up the young to virtue and honor and immortality; and this duty ought to be imposed upon them. And ministers and philanthropists

also have a duty in this matter. I take to myself blame for not having spoken on this subject before. I know not why I have not. It slipped my thought until circumstances lately brought it to me. But now I bear my testimony. I have examined before you the conditions of bodily health, and pointed out the sources of temptation. And it is the duty of ministers to raise their voices on such subjects. It is their duty not any less to preach dogma and doctrine—there is a time for everything, and so there is for dogma and doctrine; but they ought also to preach the application of these great sanitary laws and their great moral influences to the people.

If all the churches would contrive to make perpetual Lent the year round, I am sure that virtue would flourish and religion would revive in all the members of the churches, and in all the members of the congregations; and we should hear ministers preach—and the public sentiment would corroborate it—that the day is the time for work, and the night is the time for rest. Night for home; or, if it is to be used for purposes of social enjoyment, then it should be used with regard to timely hours. And no man ought to see the middle of the night out of his bed, unless he is called out by works of necessity or of morality. A man should violate Sunday quicker than the twelve o'clock hour. It is well to be in bed at ten o'clock. If our nights could be shortened at one end, and lengthened at the other, it would be better for us. Get up early. Breakfast early. Work early. Use the day for the works of the day, and the night for works of recuperation, and not for works of darkness.

May God grant that we may be *children of light*, not alone in the literal sense in which I have been speaking, but also in the figurative, in the transferred sense, that we may love rectitude, that we may love virtue, that we may love righteousness, that we may love good men, that we may love God, the supreme Goodness, and that we may be drawn by his unspeakable grace into that land where there shall be no night, but where the clear shining of his face shall be daylight forever and forever.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We gather ourselves again around thy feet, our Heavenly Father. We look up again into thy gracious face. We rejoice that there is no terror there for those who have learned to know thee. Thou lookest with peace and with joy upon us; and thou seest in us, not what is, but that which is to be when thy grace shall have wrought out the old, and brought in the new. And we rejoice that there is a refuge; that there is hope and rescue; that He that is most offended is most placable; and that the Being who is holiest and purest is the most patient and lenient with those that are impure and unholy. Though thou canst not sin, thou hast been *tempted in all points like as we are*. Thou knowest the burdens of temptation, the trials, which men go through. The secret springs of difficulty in the way of life are plain to thee. And standing in our midst, bearing our form, upon thee has beaten sorrow, and all the stream of sadness has set against thee in vain. Thou hast endured; and thou art able not only to pity, but to succor, those that are tempted; and we are drawn near to thee by this fellow feeling. And since thou hast been in our place, and borne our nature, and known our trial and trouble, and art willing to help us, why should we not come to thee. O thou Nurse of all that is good! O thou Teacher of all that is wise! O thou Captain of our salvation! to thee we come to put ourselves under thy care, sure that thou art interested in us, and that thy heart engages itself in our behalf. And why should we need friendship, with whom is God? Why should we need hope, upon whose hearts thou dost pour the twilight of thy hope? Why should we be solitary and alone, and discouraged in our loneliness, since thou art with us? All things are for our sake. The blessedness of thy life, working in providence, working in divine channels of grace, working by nature, working by thy heart and by thy spirit, working by all things that surround us, is leading us to the heavenly manna—to the heavenly spirit—to that blessedness which shall only pass from glory to glory.

And now we thank thee for any steps which we have taken; for any sins which we have overcome; for any knowledge which has enabled us to rise higher in our estimate of life, and to take higher standards. We thank thee for all the things that are good, or that in any wise point toward goodness in ourselves. By the grace of God we are what we are. All our good works thou hast wrought in us—to thy name be the honor and the glory. And we commit ourselves still to thy fatherly care. As thou hast begun, so continue and end thy work in our souls.

We pray for the prayerless. We pray for the children of parents that have gone home to glory. We pray for those that have been instructed all their life long, but with whom wisdom has brought forth no fruit.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that thou wilt make the word of truth sharper than a two-edged sword. Search out the hidden thoughts of men. Follow those that are gone from thee. Both by fear and by stripes make manifest thy fidelity.

Grant, we beseech of thee, that there may be heart-searchings; that there may be many that shall be pricked in the heart, and turned from wickedness to righteousness; from darkness to light, from the service of Satan to the service of the living God.

We pray, O Lord! that thou wilt accept our thanksgiving for the work of good that thou art doing in so many hearts; in the hearts of so many that have been brought forward into the Christian life. And may their numbers be doubled. We pray that thou wilt still go on ripening more and more the precious seed that has been sown. We thank thee for the courage which we have in that the Gospel is not dead, and that the power of God is yet in the letter and in the spirit of truth.

We pray that thy servants may everywhere be encouraged both to sow

and to reap. May they be bold in the service of God. May they not fear the face of man. May they go forth untrammelled by corrupt customs. We pray that they may have that wisdom which shall make them wiser than the maxims of selfishness. We pray that thou wilt grant to all those that are walking in the Christian life greater fruition; greater blessedness; more light; more experience of gladness; songs in the night, if they be in adversity; testimony, if they be in prosperity, that God can keep the soul even in prosperity.

Build up thy kingdom everywhere. Unite all thy people. More and more cordially may they work together for the things which respect their common Lord. Make haste to fulfill the promises which are delayed and unfulfilled respecting the final glory. O Lord Jesus! wait not. Advance thy banner. Bring forth the light, we beseech of thee, of that long year—of the thousand years—which shall stand upon the earth. Grant, we pray thee, that the day may hasten when sin and sorrow shall flee away, and joy and gladness take possession of the earth.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, our Father, thy blessing upon the word of warning which we have spoken. Grant, we pray thee, that the young may be cautioned, and that those who are in charge of them may take caution. Grant, we pray thee, that those may be rescued who are without care, and without any who look after their souls. Pity the outcast. Pity the needy. Deliver them from those that would destroy them. And we pray that thou wilt bless more and more the teachings of the sanctuary. More and more let thy Gospel be made known to men, with healing power. We ask these things, not because we are worthy, but in the adorable name of our Saviour, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

shall not quote the demonstration of this, but leave the reader to find it, as he will in the references to miracles, to the slaying of the children on the coast of Bethlehem, and the existence and ministration of angels, with other minor instances. These paragraphs are but intimations of the power which is in reserve, and which will be brought to bear in more decisive cases.

The *Albany Evening Journal* says of this book :

The appearance of Rev Henry Ward Beecher's 'Life of Jesus, the Christ,' is awaited with eager interest, mingled with considerable curiosity. Among our eminent divines, there is probably none who would cause such dissimilar conceptions of the character of his work, if it should be announced that he was preparing a history of the Saviour. Mr. Beecher's independence of judgment and catholicity of thought, except him from the general rule of estimation. Of the style of the narrative, there is, of course, no question. But it is in regard to the tone, the spirit, the theology, of the work that speculation exists. In a degree this natural desire to know something of the nature of the volume may now be satisfied. J. B. Ford & Co., of New York, Mr. Beecher's publishers, have issued a chapter of the work in a separate form. It is entitled 'The Overture of Angels,' and is printed on heavy calendered paper, tinted, with plain carmine border, gilt edges, and handsome gilt cover. It records the events clustering about the birth of the Son of God. The Lives of Christ which have been issued may be counted by hundreds, and there are scores of them which have attained wide reputation. But in none of them, we believe, are the wondrous scenes of the nativity so charmingly narrated. Mr. Beecher's imagination is of the recreative order. It is controlled by the facts. It does not leap over all bounds of revelation and history, and rush the reader into the presence of creations of his own mere fancy. He rather dwells upon the original, like an artist, in reproducing a faded picture, until again all the features, in their beauty or their sharpness, are brought out with exact fidelity. And, indeed, there is little need to do more. The angelic visitations to Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and the Shepherds, with the other uncommon events connected with the conception and birth of the holy child, need no additions. All that is requisite, is an exercise of the vivid and disciplined imagery of the historian—not the overflowing and uncontrolled delineation of the novelist. But picturesque beauty of style, freshness of discussion and originality of thought, are expected in anything which emanates from Beecher. Rhythmical, flowing, easy,

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